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*Mania a Peto.*

*Treatment*

*Mania a Peto*

*Mania a Peto*

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No 23 -

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Inaugural Essay

on the

Treatment

of

Mania a Potu

by

Henry M. Read

of Pa.

1823.

Read March 22 1823

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On the Treatment  
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Mania A Potu

The opinions of Medical Men, on the Treatment of Mania A Potu are so divided, that a just estimate of them cannot easily be formed, except from actual experience. I shall therefore only attempt, to give an account of the different remedies employed, and which of them, I have observed to be most successful, in the practice of the Almshouse of this City. These may be most conveniently considered, under the two plans of treatment generally pursued, Vix the Evacuant, and the Stimulant.

Of the remedies included under the first head, I shall give a short, and general account, and then proceed to consider them separately. They consist of Emetics, Purgatives, Bleeding, and sometimes Blisters, after the evacuations, a very slight degree of stimulus is permitted; Narcotics and Antispasmodics, are seldom or never employed.

Emetics are given by Dr. Klappp, (who appears to have introduced the practice) "to remove

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offensive matter, which impresses a morbid influence on the nerves of the stomach, and more especially to alter its state, so as to enable it, to perform its healthy functions." Now in the first place, neither the quantity, nor the quality of the matters in the stomach, seem sufficient to cause such a disturbance of its functions, or of the system generally, and in the second place, from the peculiar nature of the disease, the use of so powerful a remedy, seems not to be indicated. The causes which operate in producing this affection, so debilitate the system, that it frequently happens when Emetics have been employed, that reaction can scarcely be produced, by the most active measures. Instances have been known, in which patients have expired, during the operation of vomiting, others, in which they died almost immediately after.

The following is a case, in which the emetic was fairly tried, without producing those beneficial effects which we might have expected, from a remedy so highly extolled. P. W. was admitted into the Almshouse, on the seventh of August 1822. She had been accustomed to drink freely, for a number of years. Her disease appeared to have arisen, from the abstraction of her accustomed stimulus, for a few days

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When first seen in the evening her mind was very much disturbed and wandering, her countenance bloated, her eye wild, her tongue not much furrowed, and her pulse small and quick, she had also a considerable degree of tremor. There was not much determination to the head, nor did she complain of pain. Small doses of Tinctura Opifalidis, and Tinctura Opii, were given her every three hours.

On the morning of the eighth, she appeared to be much the same, six grains of Tartar Emetic were given in divided doses. She vomited freely, but was not at all relieved, on the contrary, an alarming degree of exhaustion was produced, the disposition to sleep did not appear to be any stronger than before, her pulse was very small and feeble. Brandy Toddy was then given her pretty freely, and a nourishing diet ordered.

Ninth. She had not slept, two grains of Opium were then ordered to be given every two hours, with the infusion of Quassia, her pulse being rather stronger, the Brandy was omitted and wine substituted.

Twelfth. Nearly the same, she had slept but half an hour since her admission, the Opium was increased to three grains, every two hours.

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On the nineteenth, she was discharged cured. Her bowels were regular during the attack. Porter was given instead of the Infusion of Sassafras, which she refused to take. Had it not been for the timely, administration of stimuli, after the operation of the emetic, it is more than probable that she would have sunk, under its debilitating influence. She ~~did not~~ fall into, that deep and refreshing sleep, which is so much spoken of by L. Klapp; a cold and clammy sweat broke out over her body, and she appeared to be sinking into the arms of death, in consequence of the utter prostration, of all the energies of the system.

This case is not selected, merely as a single instance, in which emetics have failed, but to give a general idea, of the operation of these agents on the system, in this disease, and also as one, which fell under my own personal observation, and it fully corresponds with the statements of gentlemen, who have resided in the Alm's House, and have had ample opportunities, of judging of their effects.

We may be induced to prescribe this remedy, when at the very commencement of the disease, the patient is strong, and plethoric, and has not been addicted to the use of ardent spirits, for any length of time, and where there is an evident disposition to vomit, without the power of effecting it.

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Indeed it must be admitted, that where emetics do succeed, the most signal benefit, often results from their employment, at the same time bearing in mind, that their administration, requires great caution, and discrimination. Dr Klapp prefers giving the Emetic Tartar alone, in large doses, until thorough evacuations both upwards, and downwards are produced. But it is a safer plan, to combine it with Spicacuanha, in doses of from one to two grains of the former, with twenty or thirty grains of the latter.

In the next place let us consider Purgatives. These appear to be of great value, in the treatment of this disease. They fulfil many of the indications, to meet which Emetics have been proposed, and they act without producing those alarming symptoms, which have been before stated, as following the employment of those remedies. The bowels are frequently constipated, and sometimes require active purging to relieve them of their contents. Dr Armstrong recommends this practice very strongly and considers it by far the most efficacious, but with this limitation (which appears to be extremely proper) that it is to be pursued only, in the "early periods of the disease"

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He also during the operation of purgatives, recommends supporting the system, by cordial stimulants.

Lea in a tract on *Delirium Tremens* (the name he gave to this disease) speaks favourably of them, though he does not consider them, as the most important of our remedies.

It has been stated, as a serious objection to the use of purgatives, that the patient is apt to be carried off by diarrhea. This seldom or never happens, if the directions relative to their employment, laid down by Dr Armstrong, be strictly pursued.

The purgatives most commonly used, are calomel, jalap, and the Sulphate of Magnesia; in their administration we must be entirely regulated, by the age, constitution, and circumstances of the Patient. In the advanced stages of the disease, Enemata, are to be preferred to Purgatives.

I shall speak next of Bleeding. Venesection is seldom admissible, except in some few cases, where great plethora exists, and where there is great determination to the brain, or some other important organ. Blood should in general be abstracted by cups, or leeches applied if possible to the part affected, in that case, the taking

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away of a small quantity, will often be found serviceable. Dry Cupping may be used in almost every case, with advantage. The pulse as a general rule, cannot be safely relied upon in this disease, it may be full and quick, and seem to indicate depletion in cases, where nothing could be more prejudicial. I have seen the abstraction of two or three ounces of blood from the arm of a patient, (whose symptoms in almost any other disease, would have called for copious depletion) nearly produce syncope. If we do draw blood from a vein, it should always be done slowly, and from a small orifice, nor should we wait to observe its effects, but go on immediately with the other remedies. This disease was formerly treated by some Practitioners, as genuine Phrenitis, by active depletory measures, blisters &c, as may be easily supposed, the results were so discouraging, that they were obliged to abandon them, and resort to remedies of a different description.

Blisters do not appear, to be much used in this disease. They have been condemned, by many Physicians, as very prejudicial, occasioning and augmenting irritation, and retarding the effects of other medicines.

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what has occurred to me, on the subject of Evacuants, let us  
 in the next place consider such remedies, as are of an opposite  
 character. Of these, Opium is decidedly the first in importance.  
 When, and by whom, this medicine was first introduced into  
 the practice in this disease, cannot now be correctly ascer-  
 tained, but it appears, that it was used as a principal  
 agent in its cure, by many practitioners, before the disease  
 had even a name, or had obtained a place in any system  
 of nosology. From this circumstance, and also because  
 it retains the greater part of its celebrity at the present day,  
 notwithstanding the objections which have been urged  
 against it by some writers, we may fairly conclude, that  
 it is entitled to our confidence, and merits a full experi-  
 ment of its effects. The chief indication in *Mania Ac-  
 uta*, is to induce sleep, and if this can be successfully  
 accomplished, the most happy consequences will  
 generally result. For this purpose, Opium is preeminently  
 serviceable, although when we consider its stimulant  
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will frequently succeed. There is always great irritability of the system, which must be subdued, before a favourable termination can be expected, and this cannot be effected in general, so promptly, and efficaciously by any other remedy. It supplies the place of the ordinary stimulus, to which the stomach has been accustomed, while at the same time it is effecting a cure of the disease. I do not however mean to assert, that opium will alone invariably perform a cure, but that it will be found to be the principal medicine, on which we are to rely; and that when proper measures are used, in conjunction with it, we may look for the most favourable results. But to obtain these, the dose must be both large and frequently repeated, and we should not be deterred, if success should not follow our first attempts, but persevere until the system is completely under its influence. The quantity of opium, which may be safely given to patients, who perhaps never took a grain before, in the whole course of their lives, is almost incredible. As much as half an ounce of Laudanum, and from twenty to thirty grains of opium have been given, in the twenty-four hours, without producing sound sleep. To be sure such a case is not frequently met

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with, but it serves to shew how much the system will bear, under peculiar circumstances. It's better to commence (unless the disease be far advanced) with from one, to two grains of Opium every two hours, until the desired effect is obtained, if this does not take place after a reasonable time has elapsed, the dose ought to be increased. Some Physicians prefer Laudanum, to the Opium in substance, but if there is any choice, perhaps it is better to give the former during the day, and the latter at night.

However as it is so powerful a remedy, we should be cautious not to give more than is absolutely necessary, for sometimes after the disease has been cured, we have not only to combat the debility succeeding it, but also the effects produced by the use of large quantities of Opium.

The Tincture of Hops, is a valuable auxiliary, in the treatment of this disease, it is an excellent anodyne, and at the same time a bitter, which is very agreeable to the enfeebled stomach of the patient. It is also a good substitute for Opium, when this cannot be used from idiosyncrasy, or some adventitious circumstance. I have known slight attacks of Mania & Pety, cured entirely,

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by this medicine, combined with *Porter*. Sometimes *Opium*, although given largely, will not produce the desired effect, in such cases it is advisable to add the *Tincture of Hops*, which will frequently succeed in causing sleep. In exhibiting it, the better plan is, to combine it with *Porter*, from one to two ounces to a bottle, to be given in the twenty-four hours.

The *Tincture of Asafatida*, is also very serviceable. In this disease, the patient is generally affected with a distressing degree of tremor, preventing sleep, and exhausting his strength. To quiet this, *Tincture of Asafatida* is particularly adapted, by overcoming nervous irritation, whilst it proves a cordial stimulus to the stomach. It should be given in combination with *opium*, the operation of which it greatly assists, instead of retarding, which we might expect to be the case, if we merely considered the separate properties of the two medicines. From one drachm, to half an ounce, may be given repeated frequently.

*Camphor* has sometimes proved a very useful remedy, but in general, we should be careful in prescribing it, as it is a powerful and pervading stimulant, the effects

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of which soon pass off, leaving, behind, a corresponding degree of languor and debility. We are therefore obliged to repeat the dose, and at the same time, to increase it so frequently, that the stomach of the patient is unable to bear it. To the latter stages of the disease, it is more peculiarly suited, where the system, requires an unusual degree of stimulus, to excite reaction. The best method of giving it, is in substance, from two to five grains every two or three hours, combined with opium.

Phosphorus, has been recommended; one case only in which it was tried has come to my knowledge, and in that instance it was successful. Eight grains were dissolved in an ounce of Sulphuric Ether, and a drachm of this was given, in the twenty-four hours. The dose may appear large, but it must be recollected, that in this disease the system will often bear almost any degree of stimulus.

The Volatile Alkali is useful, in the low forms of *Mania a Potu*, yet care should be taken not to commence with too large a dose, as the effect of it, from the nature of the remedy, would soon be lost.

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be found serviceable, in the same stage of the disease, in which Camphor is proper, and if we may be permitted to reason from analogy, this medicine (which is well known as being one of the principal agents, on whose influence we are to rely, in resuscitating the vital powers of the system, when they have almost been extinguished, by the violence of disease) would certainly rank very high, in the list of remedies to be used, in this disorder.

Dr Armstrong speaks favourably of a combination of Calomel and Opium, which he has used pretty extensively. After having evacuated the bowels, he prescribes two or three grains of Calomel, and one and a half of Opium, every six or eight hours for the first day or two, and then decreases the quantity of Opium, until salivation is produced, when a cure is almost always effected. Never having seen this remedy used, I cannot speak of its utility, but coming from such a source, it is certainly entitled to great confidence. Of course, it would not do in very violent cases, where the patient is sometimes carried off in two or three days. The same writer also recommends affusions, with warm and cold water, strongly impregnated with salt, to excite the action, of the capillary vessels.

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The first may answer very well, where the surface of the body is cold, and constricted, but the second, although he states that it was reported favourably of by some medical gentlemen, and also that he himself was pleased with its effects, appears rather a hazardous experiment, and would require great caution in its administration.

I shall next proceed to treat of those Liquors, which are proper to be used, in this disease. These are Brandy, Wine, and the malt liquors, especially Porter. The first ought not to be given except in extreme cases, as in general either of the liquors of a similar nature, have originally caused the disease.

Wine is a more generous stimulant, and where it can be had good, is much more eligible. The effect it has immediately upon the stomach, is very different from that of Brandy, nor does it produce such subsequent debility. It may be given pure or in the form of wine whey, the latter being preferable, where we cannot easily administer nourishment in any other mode. Porter is very useful, not only from its stimulant properties, but also from the quantity of bitter principle which it contains. It may generally be given during the whole of the disease, and afterwards be the means of weaning the patient from his accustomed stimulus. Quaffia may

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The diet should in general be light and nourishing.

But with all these resources, unless the patient be abstracted from all noise, and every thing be removed which can excite his attention; whilst the room is kept perfectly dark, failure will often be the consequence. So much indeed is to be gained by this method, that Dr. Kehn of this city, used to trust entirely to its efficacy. He would shut up the diseased person in a dark room, and permit no one to enter; gave no medicine, and allowed no nourishment until sound sleep had been induced; and strange as it may appear, Dr. Kehn had generally as great success in this disease, as any other practitioner, who treated it by the established methods.

Dr. John K. Mitchell has proposed, to combine emetics and opium: to give an emetic, and follow it up immediately, with tea-spoonfull doses of laudanum every hour, until the patient sleeps soundly. He states that he has pursued this plan frequently, and has succeeded in almost every case. I have known

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myself, but of three cases treated in this manner; of these two recovered, the third died soon after the operation of the emetic. He does not however prescribe emetics indiscriminately, as recommended by Dr. Klapp, but only in those cases which appear to warrant their employment.

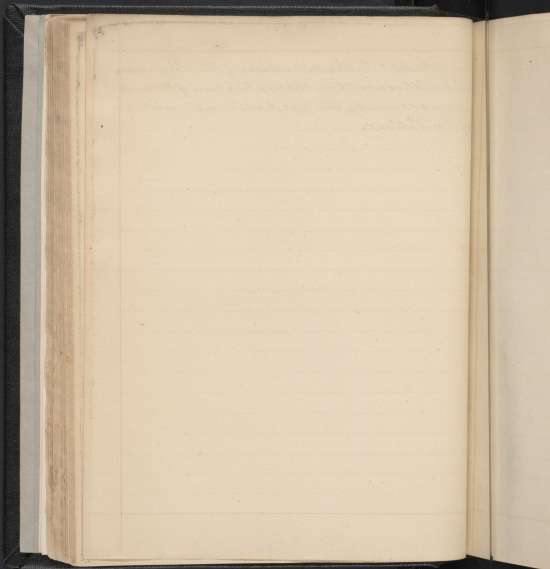
Having thus considered the different remedies recommended by Medical Writers, and Practitioners, in the treatment of this disease, I will only remark, that one cause of the variance of opinion, has been perhaps the different stages of the disease, in which the stimulant, or evacuant plans have been tried. As was before mentioned, when the patient is vigorous, and plethoric, and the attack has been but of short duration, evacuates may be tried with great success; But in the cases which usually occur in the Almshouse of this City, these remedies would in all probability frequently be fatal, as they would be applied to individuals, often of advanced age, and almost always of very enfeebled constitutions.

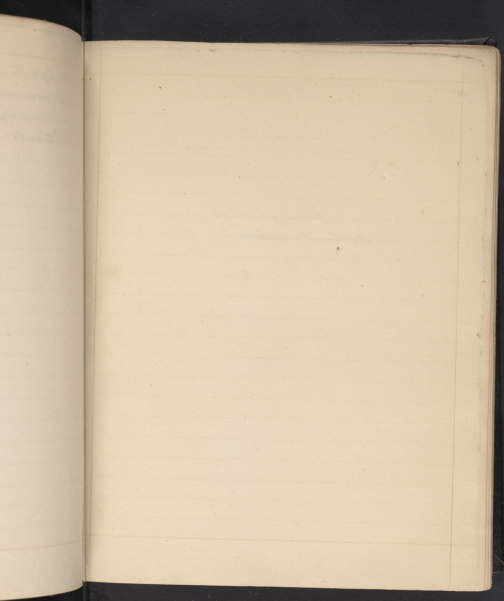
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No 10  
126 N. 2<sup>d</sup> St.

C.  
1824

A very excellent Judicious Essay - appear-  
ing to be founded on practical observation.

J. R. C.

Mania a Potu.

Charles Randolph